

IRS Won't Elaborate On Snooping Practice

The Internal Revenue Service refused yesterday to release details on its placing of listening devices in conference rooms in cities across the Nation.

The IRS had sent a list of the cities to Sen. Edward V. Long (D-Mo.), who released it on Sunday. Long is chairman of a Senate Judiciary subcommittee investigating snooping practices in Federal agencies.

When asked for details on the list, which included Washington, Alexandria and Baltimore, an IRS spokesman said the agency would only restate its position on the use of recording devices and two-way mirrors.

An IRS statement said the equipment had been used only in areas of organized crime, racketeer investigations and so-called "integrity cases," such as when an employee is suspected of taking bribes. The statement said installations have been eliminated and the IRS will now follow guidelines set up by the Attorney General.

At hearings in Miami yesterday, Bernard Fensterwald, chief counsel of the subcommittee, said the IRS, exerting executive privilege, had declined to release details in connection with the list of cities.

Also testifying in the day-long hearing were Thomas Mennitt, IRS special agent in Miami; George Smith, a Miami electronics expert who produces snooping devices, and Morris Shenker of St. Louis, president of the National Association of Defense Lawyers.

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Sen. Edward Long (D-Missouri) looked through an infrared snooperscope yesterday as his subcommittee opened hearings in Miami on government snooping. Scope allows viewer to see at night.